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after the birth of the first child ; they are also required to abstain from honey during each subsequent pregnancy ; and in their case, too, a chief or elder (preferably a relative) officiates, and not a woman!."

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We may now proceed to the ritual customs connected with death and burial. In all the Great Andaman tribes disease and death are supposed to be due to the spirits of the jungle and the sea. The subject will be dealt with in the next chapter.

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On the occurrence of a death the news quickly spreads through the camp, and all the women collect round the body and, sitting down, weep loudly until they are exhausted. The women then retire and the men come and weep over the corpse. All the adult members of the community then proceed to cover themselves with a wash of common clay smeared evenly over their bodies and limbs. This clay is of the kind called *odu* in *Aka-Jeru* and *og* in *Aka-Bea*. The nearer relatives and more intimate friends of the deceased also plaster some of the same clay on their heads.

Some of the women, generally, but not necessarily, relatives, remove any ornaments the dead person may have been wearing, shave the head and decorate the body. This decoration consists of lines of fine pattern in white clay alternating with bands of red paint. A band of red paint is placed across the upper lip passing from ear to ear and the ears themselves are smeared with the pigment. The greater the estimation in which the deceased person is held the greater is the care lavished upon this the last decoration.

Thus decorated the body is prepared for burial. The legs and arms are flexed so that the knees come up under the chin and the fists rest against the cheeks. A *Cyrena* shell (or sometimes in these days a steel knife) is placed in the closed hand. A sleeping mat is wrapped round the body, and over this a number of the large palm leaves known as *kobo* (*Aka-Jeru*) are arranged and the whole is made into a bundle and tied up with rope. Before the ropes are all tied the relatives of the dead person take their last farewell by gently blowing on the face of the corpse.

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out with a bow and arrow in his hand, and as he danced in front of the spectators he pretended to shoot at them.

In another dance he represented *Ele*, the lightning. He sat on a stone that had been placed in the middle of the open space, swinging his arms to the time of the chorus, and every now and then shaking his leg.

This observation is an important one in several ways. Although I asked the man to repeat it, in order that I might make fuller notes and obtain explanations of many obscure points, and although he grudgingly said that he would, yet he did not do so. He was, moreover, very reserved over the matter, and not very willing to talk about his own performance.

I believe that the performance was an entirely exceptional affair. I never at any other time either saw or heard of one man or even several men, giving a dance for the amusement of others. I think that the whole thing was entirely the invention of the performer. He had given the same performance, or one very similar, at least once before the occasion on which I saw it.

We may now turn to the Andamanese beliefs relating to the soul and the life after death.

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The vital principle is at different times identified by the Andamanese with the pulse, the breath, with the blood and with the fat, particularly the kidney-fat. Thus the body of a slain enemy is burnt so that the blood and fat may be consumed in smoke and ascend to the sky where they will no longer be a danger to those who have slain him.

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The nearest approach to our notion of a soul that the natives possess is their belief concerning the double or reflection seen in a mirror. In the Northern tribes the word *ot-jumulo* means "reflection," and also "shadow," and is also nowadays applied to a photograph. The word *ot-jumu*, in the same languages, means "a dream" or "to dream." We may perhaps translate the word *ot-jumulo* as meaning "soul." In the *Aka-Bea* language *ot-yolo* is "reflection," while there is a different word, *ot-diya* or *ot-lerc*, for "shadow," and neither of the words has any connection with the word "dream" which is *taraba*. Mr Man translates the word *ot-yolo* as "soul."

associated with *Puluga* or *Biliku*. All the versions that I heard, 775
however, referred to the past and not to the future¹.

The Andamanese speak of unconsciousness as "death," and 761 ●
regard a person who has been unconscious for some time as 828
having been dead and returned to life again. I was once told
that an old man in the village was "dead" and found him in a
state of coma from which he recovered and lived for several days.
There are stories of persons having returned to life even after
they have been buried. One such tale was told me in the North
Andaman. A man died and was buried. As his friends and
relatives, after packing up their belongings, were leaving the
camp in their canoes, the man's voice was heard calling. His
wife and mother turned back and met him and took him in their
canoe. He lived for some time after this and then he died and
was buried again. Again the same thing happened, the dead
man re-appearing just as they were setting off in their canoes
from the camp that they were deserting on account of his death.
Finally the man died a third time. When he was buried this
time the men dug a very deep hole some distance from the
camp, and then hurried back to the camp and hastily gathered
up their belongings and left it. Nothing more was seen of
the dead man, but when, after the lapse of some months, they
went to dig up the bones, they found the mat and leaves and
rope in which the corpse had been bound, but there were
no bones.

Amongst the coast-dwellers of the North Andaman I found 761
a belief that the soul of a dying man goes out with the ebbing 775
tide.

There are, amongst the Andamanese, certain individuals who 756
are distinguished from their fellows by the supposed possession 791
of supernatural powers. These specially favoured persons

* ¹ It may be noted that in the Andamanese languages there is no future tense of the verb, and it is often very difficult to know whether a speaker is referring to the present or to the future. Further, although there is a past tense, a native often uses the present tense in a narrative relating to the past, so that a statement relating to the past and one relating to the future may have exactly the same grammatical form. Mr Ellis, writing in the *Journal of the Philological Society* (1882) from information supplied by Mr Man, gives a verbal suffix *-ngabo* denoting the future in the *Aka-Bea* language. Mr Portman points out that this is an error. (*Notes on the Languages of the South Andaman*, p. 88.)

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791 correspond, to some degree, with the medicine-men, magicians or shamans of other primitive societies. The name for these medicine-men in the North Andaman is *oko-jumu*, meaning literally "dreamer" or "one who speaks from dreams" from a stem *-jumu* the primary meaning of which refers to the phenomena of dreams. In *Aka-Bea* the corresponding term is *oko-paiad*, and according to Mr Man, this term also means "dreamer." Mr Portman, however, gives *taraba* as the *Aka-Bea* word for "dream" or "to dream."

According to a statement by Mr Man, only men can possess the powers that entitle them to be regarded as *oko-paiad*¹. The natives whom I questioned told me that a woman may possess the same powers, though it is more usual for men to become famous in this way than women. There is no very clear dividing line between those who are *oko-jumu* or *oko-paiad* and those who are not; one person may possess the powers in only a slight degree, so as scarcely to differentiate him from others, while another may be much more highly gifted.

At the present time it is no longer possible to obtain full and satisfactory information on this subject. Most of the old *oko-jumu* and *oko-paiad* are now dead. Amongst the younger men there are a few who pretend to the position, but the recent intercourse with foreigners has produced a degree of scepticism in such matters that makes it difficult or nearly impossible to obtain any reliable information as to the former beliefs from any but the very old men. To this difficulty must be added that in talking to some of the very few old men who could have given more valuable information I had to make use of an interpreter, and though they might have been willing to confide to me some of the secrets of their profession they would not do so before a younger man of their own race.

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775 The powers of a dreamer, supernatural as they are, can only be acquired by supernatural means, through contact in one way or another with the spirits (i.e. the *Lau* or *Čauga*). One way of coming into contact with the spirits is by death. If a man should, as the natives put it, die and then come back to life again,

¹ Man, *op. cit.* p. 96.

III]

RELIGIOUS AND MAGICAL BELIEFS

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he is, by that adventure, endowed with the power that makes a medicine-man. One man of the *Aka-Kera* tribe was pointed out to me as having obtained his powers in this way. It would seem that during a serious illness he was unconscious for some twelve hours or so, and his friends thought that he was dead. A medicine-man whom I met with in the *A-Pučikwar* tribe was said to have died and come to life again three times. Another man, whom I did not meet, was described to me as a great *oko-jumu*, and from the description given it seemed to me that he was subject to epileptic fits. As against this, however, Mr Man states that "epilepsy is a recognised form of malady, but the fits are not regarded in a superstitious light".

Another way in which a man can acquire magical powers is by direct communication with the spirits. A man who died a few years ago was believed by the natives to have once met with some spirits in the jungle, and to have acquired in this way the powers of an *oko-jumu*. He used to go off into the jungle by himself at intervals and hold communication with the spirits with whom he had made friends. From such a visit he had returned with his head decorated with shredded palm-leaf fibre (*koro*) which had, so he said, been placed on him by the spirits. This man had a reputation as a powerful *oko-jumu*.

In a less degree the powers of an *oko-jumu* may be obtained through dreams. It is believed that certain men have the power of communicating with the spirits in dreams, and such men are *oko-jumu*. If a man or boy experiences dreams that are in any way extraordinary, particularly if, in his dreams he sees spirits, either the spirits of dead persons known to him when alive, or spirits of the forest or the sea, he may acquire in time the reputation of a medicine-man.

A man may claim some degree of magical power, and yet his claims may not be recognized by others. Each *oko-jumu* has to make his own reputation, and to sustain it when made. This he can only do by demonstrating his power to others. Once this reputation is his, he not only receives the respect of others but also makes a considerable personal profit. Every one is anxious to be on good terms with one who is believed to

¹ Man, *op. cit.* p. 83.

dangers that are supposed to accrue from the eating of food if due precautions be not taken. One statement of the natives is that the danger they fear is sickness. Now sickness of all kinds is believed by the Andamanese to be caused by certain supernatural beings called *Lau* or *Čauga*,—the spirits of the dead; and further, we have seen that the danger connected with food is sometimes said to be the danger of an attack by the spirits. So that it is evident that to understand the meaning of the fear of foods it is first of all necessary to understand the notions they have about the spirits, and to do this we shall have to consider the various customs relating to death and burial.

For the society a death is the loss of one of its members, one of its constituent parts. A person occupies a definite position in society, has a certain share in the social life, is one of the supports of the network of social relations. His death constitutes a partial destruction of the social cohesion, the normal social life is disorganised, the social equilibrium is disturbed. After the death the society has to organise itself anew and reach a new condition of equilibrium. In reference to the small community of the Andamans we may translate the above statement into terms of personal feeling by saying that the death removes a person who was the object of feelings of affection and attachment on the part of others and is thus a direct offence against those sentiments in the survivors.

Though the dead man has ceased to exist as a member of the society, it is clear that he has by no means ceased to influence the society. On the contrary he has become the source of intense painful emotions. Where the affection that was felt towards him was previously a source of pleasure it now becomes a source of pain. Defining the "social personality" of an individual as being the sum of characteristics by which he has an effect upon the social life and therefore on the social sentiments of others, we may say that by death the social personality is not annihilated but undergoes a profound change, so that from being an object of pleasurable states of the social sentiments it becomes an object of painful states. This is expressed by the Andamanese by saying that by death a man or woman becomes a *Lau*.

The burial customs of the Andaman Islanders, however, are

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775 attachment to him, and producing a condition of dysphoria, of diminished social activity. The natural impulse of the Andaman Islander or of any other human being, would be, I believe, not to shun the dead body of a loved one, but to remain near it as long as possible. It is the society, acting under a quite different set of impulses, that compels the relatives to separate themselves from the remains of the one they loved. The death of a small child has very little influence on the general activity of the community, and the motive for severing connection with the dead that is present in the case of an adult, either does not exist or is so weak as to be overruled by the private feelings of affection, and so the child is buried in the hut of the parents, that they may continue to keep it near them. This affords a good test of the hypothesis, and gives strong support to the view that the fear of the dead man (his body and his spirit) is a collective feeling induced in the society by the fact that by death he has become the object of a dysphoric condition of the collective consciousness.

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753 If the Andamanese are asked what they fear from the spirit of a dead man they reply that they fear sickness or death, and that if the burial and mourning customs are not properly observed the relatives of the dead person will fall sick and perhaps die.

The basis of this notion of the spirits is that the near relatives of the deceased, being bound to him by close social ties, are influenced by everything that happens to him, and share in his good or evil fortune. So that when by sickness and resulting death he is removed from the community, they are as it were drawn after him. For this reason they are, during the period of mourning, between life and death, being still attached to the dead man. Contact with the world of the dead is therefore regarded as dangerous for the living because it is believed that they may be drawn completely into that world. Death is a process by which a person leaves the living world and enters the world of the spirits, and since no one dies willingly he is conceived as being under a compulsive force acting from the world of spirits. Now sickness is a condition that often ends in death, a first stage of the way leading to the world of spirits. Hence, sickness is conceived by the Andamanese as a condition of partial contact

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with that world. This is what is meant by the statement that sickness and death come from the spirits.

The way the Andamanese think about the spirits is shown in the *Akar-Bale* legend of the origin of death¹. *Yaramurud*, having died through an accident, self-caused, becomes a spirit, but he does so only under the compulsion exercised upon him by his mother, who, now that he is dead, insists that he must go away from the world of the living and become a spirit. The spirit then comes back to see his brother and by this contact causes the brother's death. The story implies that it was not because *Yaramurud* was evilly disposed towards his brother that he killed him, but on the contrary it was his attachment to his relative that caused him to return to visit him, and death followed as a result of this contact of the living man with the spirit. Since that time deaths have continued to occur in the same way. Thus it appears that the Andamanese conceive that the spirits do not cause death and sickness through evil intention, but through their mere proximity, and, as the legend very clearly shows, the burial customs are intended to cut off the unwilling spirit from contact with the living. This explains also why during the period of mourning the relatives of a dead person are thought to be in danger of sickness, and have more to fear from the spirit than others, for since it is they who were most attached to him during life it is they who are most likely to suffer from contact with him after he is dead. It was *Yaramurud's* brother who was the first to die through the influence of the spirits.

The feelings of the living towards the spirits of the dead are therefore ambivalent, compounded of affection and fear, and this must be clearly recognized if we are to understand all the Andamanese beliefs and customs. We may compare the relation between the society of the living and the society of the dead to that between two hostile communities having occasional friendly relations. That the Andamanese themselves look upon it in some such way is shown by the belief that the ceremony by which a dead man is initiated into the world of spirits resembles the peace-making ceremony. The dead man, up to the time of his death, has been living in a state of enmity with the spirits, and before he can enter their community and share their life he

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765 the relatives of the deceased, one of whom subsequently takes possession of the skull, and wears it until he (or she) chooses to part with it, or is asked to do so by another member of the family. It should here be stated that it is by no means obligatory upon the survivor of an elderly couple, or any relative, to carry the bones or skull of the deceased for a lengthened period: except in the event of marrying a brother, sister, or cousin of the deceased, these relics can be given at any time to a friend who may ask for them; thus it not unfrequently happens that the remains of one who was a chief or a favourite in his day, are scattered far and wide among his admirers, but when in course of time they get mislaid or broken, the owner is often easily reconciled to his loss, or makes it good by procuring similar mementoes of another and more recently departed friend.

20. It may be said that as a rule no adult is without at least one *châw-ga-tâ* (i.e., a human bone necklace), and the skulls, which are generally to be found in every encampment, are worn by each in turn, if only for a few hours.

[764] 21. The only difference made on the occasion of the death of a chief, his wife, or one of his near relatives, is that *all* the men and lads of the encampment smear themselves with *ôg*-, and attend the funeral; the relations alone, however, are the mourners during the succeeding weeks or months which intervene before the *tî-tô-latnga*-, though, as a token of respect for the deceased, and of sympathy with the mourners, other members of the tribe often abstain from some favourite article of food, and take no part in festivities during the same period.

22. If a member of another tribe happen to die while on a visit, the body would be disposed of in one of the modes I have endeavoured to describe, after which intimation would be sent to the friends of the deceased, so that they might know where to seek for the skeleton when the time for disinterment should arrive.

766 23. The body of an enemy, stranger, or captive child would be thrown into the sea, or buried *sans cérémonie*, as the bones would never be in request.

• 761 24. A sudden death is at once attributed to the malign influence of *Ērem-châw-gala*, if the deceased had been recently in the jungles, or to *jûru-win*-, if he had been on the sea; in either case one of the male relatives of the victim, representing the feelings of the community, approaches the spot where the body

I mention this more especially as the erroneous statement made by some early writer, that "a widow wears her husband's skull suspended round her neck for the rest of her life" has been repeated in more recent accounts, and hitherto remains uncorrected.

761 is lying, and shoots several arrows in rapid succession into the
766 surrounding jungle, only taking care to avoid injury to the by-standers, and then, seizing a pig-spear, *ēr-dūtnga*,¹ if *ērrem-chāugala* be the demon suspected, or a turtle-spear, *kowai'a l'ōko dūtnga*,² if it be *jūru-win*—who is accounted guilty, he pierces the ground all round the corpse, hoping thereby to inflict a mortal injury upon the unseen enemy; while so engaged he vents his grief and indignation in no measured terms of imprecation.

25. When a death which is attributed to *ērrem-chāugala*'s malignity occurs so late in the day that the burial has to be deferred till the following morning, those who are not mourners sing in turns throughout the night, in the belief that this demon will thus be deterred from doing any further harm in the encampment.

26. At death they say that *ērrem-chāugala* and his sons feast upon the blood and soft tissues of all who die on land, and that their leavings, excepting of course the bones, are disposed of by worms, *wēn*-, but *jūru-win* is supposed to consume every portion of those who fall into his clutches.

576 **Meeting and Parting. &c.**—1. Contrary to the customs of most races, no salutations³ pass between friends, even after a more or less lengthened separation, such as rubbing noses, kissing⁴ shaking hands, &c.; but on meeting they remain silently gazing at each other for, in our eyes, an absurdly long time—unless of course one or both be hurried; the younger then makes some commonplace remark which apparently has the effect of loosening their tongues, for they at once commence hearing and telling the news.⁵

576 2. Relatives, after an absence of a few weeks or months,
152 testify their joy at meeting by sitting with their arms round each other's necks,⁶ and weeping and howling⁷ in a manner which would lead a stranger to suppose that some great sorrow had befallen them; and, in point of fact, there is no difference observable between their demonstrations of joy on these occasions and those of grief at the death of one of their

¹ Vide Appendix B, item 9.

² Vide Appendix B, item 10.

³ Vide Colebrooke and Anderson.

⁴ Kisses are considered indicative of affection, but are only bestowed on infants.

⁵ One might imagine that the writer of the article entitled "Chippers of Flint" which appeared in "Cornhill" (vol. xii, p. 200), had heard of or witnessed a rencontre of this description, but had not watched its progress, or he would not have spoken of this race as "all but speechless."

⁶ Vide Plate III, fig. 2.

⁷ This custom resembles that which exists among New Zealanders under the name of the *Tangai*.

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those in pain or distress he is pitiful, and sometimes deigns to afford relief.

- VI. He is the Judge from whom each soul receives its sentence after death, and, to some extent, the hope of escape from the torments of *jerreg-lâr-mû-gu-* (regarding which anon) is said to affect their course of action in the present life.¹

9. *Pûluga-* is believed to live in a large stone house in the sky, with a wife whom he created for himself; she is green in appearance, and has two names, *chân'a .dû'lola* (Mother Fresh-water Shrimp), and *chân'a .pâ-lak-* (Mother Eel); by her he has a large family, all, except the eldest, being girls; these last, known as *mô-ro-win-* (sky spirits or angels), are said to be black in appearance, and, with their mother, amuse themselves from time to time by throwing fish and prawns into the streams and sea for the use of the inhabitants of the world. *Pûluga-*'s son is called *pîj-chôr-*: he is regarded as a sort of archangel, and is alone permitted to live with his father, whose orders it is his duty to make known to the *mô-ro-win-*.

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10. *Pûluga-* is said to eat and drink, and, during the dry months of the year, to pass much of his time in sleep, as is proved by his voice (thunder) being rarely heard at that season; he is the source whence they receive all their supplies of animals, birds, and turtles; when they anger him he comes out of his house and blows, and growls, and hurls burning faggots at them—in other words, visits their offences with violent thunderstorms and heavy squalls; except for this purpose he seldom leaves home, unless it be during the rains, when he descends to earth to provide himself with certain kinds of food; how often this happens they do not know since, now-a-days, he is invisible.

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11. *Pûluga-* never himself puts any one to death, but he objects so strongly to seeing a pig badly quartered and carved that he invariably points out those who offend him in this respect to a class of malevolent spirits called *chôl-*, one of whom forthwith despatches the unfortunate individual.

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12. *Pûluga-* has no authority over the evil spirits, the most dreaded of which are *ĕrem-châugala*, *jârû-win-*, and *nî'la-*; they are self-created, and have existed from time immemorial. The first of these, the evil spirit of the woods, has a numerous progeny by his wife *chân'a .bad-gilola*, who remains at home with her daughters and younger children, while her husband and grown-up sons roam about the jungles with a lighted torch

¹ It is from regard to the fact that their beliefs on these points approximate so closely to the true faith concerning the Deity that I have adopted the English method of spelling all equivalents of "God" with an initial capital.

attached to their left legs, in order that the former may injure any unhappy wights who may meet them unprotected,¹ and in the dark; he generally makes his victims ill, or kills them by wounding them internally with invisible arrows,² and, if he is successful in causing death, it is supposed that they feast upon the raw flesh;³ *Ērem-chàugala*, indeed, appears to be to the Andamanese much what "*Arlak*"⁴ is to the aboriginal Australian: in both cases these evil spirits are represented as afraid of light; *Ērem-chàugala* is said to be also afraid of, or to avoid, the demon *nt'la*-. 776 761 753

13. This spirit, *nt'la*-,⁵ is supposed to live in ant-hills, and to have neither wife nor child; he is not regarded as such a malevolent personage as *Ērem-chàugala*, and, though he is always armed with a knife, he rarely injures human beings with it, or, when he does do so, it is not in order to feed upon their bodies, for he is said to eat earth only.

14. As regards *jū'ru-wîn*-, the evil spirit of the sea, they say that he too is invisible, and lives in the sea with his wife and children, who help him to devour the bodies of those who are drowned or buried at sea; fish constitute the staple of his food, but he also occasionally, by way of variety, attacks the aborigines he finds fishing on the shores or by the creeks. The weapon he uses is a spear, and persons who are seized with cramp or any sudden illness, on returning from, or while on the water, are said to have been "speared" by *jū'ru-wîn*-. He has various submarine residences, and boats for travelling under the surface of the sea, while he carries with him a net, in which he places all the victims, human or piscine, he may succeed in capturing. 776 753

15. Besides these three chief demons, there is a company of evil spirits who are called *chôl*-, and who are much dreaded. They are believed to be descendants of *mai'a chôl*-,⁶ who lived in antediluvian times. They generally punish those who offend them by baking or roasting pig's flesh, the smell of which is particularly obnoxious to them, as it is also to *Patuga*-, who, therefore, often assists them in discovering the delinquent; the same risk does not attend boiling pork,⁷ which the olfactory nerves of the fastidious *chôl*- are not keen enough to detect. 776

¹ *Fide ante* "Superstitions," paragraph 1.

² *Fide ante* "Medicine," paragraph 1 (foet-cote), and "Death and Burial," paragraph 24.

³ *Fide ante* "Death and Burial," paragraph 26.

⁴ *Fide* Wood, "Natural History of Man," p. 92.

⁵ Cases have been cited of persons who have been found stabbed, whose deaths are attributed to *Ni'la*: the possibility of the individuals in question having been murdered is scouted.

⁶ *Fide post* "Mythology," paragraph 33.

⁷ *Fide post* "Food," paragraph 25.

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● 761 16. While the Andamanese say that they are liable to be struck by *ērem-chāw-gala* or *jūru-wia-* at any time or in any place, the *chōt-* strike those only who offend them, and that during the day while they are stationary, this being necessitated by the distance from the earth of their abode, whence they hurl their darts: an invisible spear is the weapon they always use, and this is thrown with unerring aim at the head of their victim, and is invariably fatal. As these demons are considered especially dangerous on the hottest days, they are apparently held accountable for the deaths from sunstroke which happen from time to time.

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821 17. The sun, *chān'a bōdo-*, is the wife of the moon, *mai'a ōgar-*, and the stars, *chāto-*, which are of both sexes, are their children: the latter go to sleep during the day; the whole family have their meals near *Pāluga's* house, but never enter it; *chān'a bōdo-* is like fire and covered with thorns, but *mai'a ōgar-* is white skinned, and has two long tusks¹ and a big beard; their home is situated somewhere below the eastern horizon, and while the former, after setting, rests till dawn, the latter, probably in consequence of the cares of his numerous family, is obliged to keep very irregular hours. During their passage under the earth to their home, they are believed to afford the blessing of light to the unfortunate spirits in Hades, and also, while sleeping, to shed a "dim religious light" over that region: it is by *Pāluga's* command that the celestial bodies, while crossing the sky, bestow their light.

18. The phenomena of the waning and waxing of the moon is explained by saying that they are occasioned by "his" applying a coating of cloud to his person by degrees, after the manner of their own use of *kūi'ob-* and *tā'la-ōg-*,² and then gradually wiping it off.³

19. Reference has already been made to their superstition regarding the cause of a lunar eclipse, but in case *mai'a ōgar-* should be so ill-advised as permanently to withhold his light or render himself in other ways still more disagreeable, whenever the moon is eclipsed some persons at once seize their bows and twang them as rapidly as possible, thereby producing a rattling sound as if discharging a large number of arrows, while others commence at once sharpening their *rā'tā-*.⁴ Of course this hostile demonstration is never lost upon the moon, who does not venture to hurt those who show themselves ready

¹ The horns of the crescent moon.

² *I'ide* Appendix B, items 58 and 60.

³ "The Eskimo say that the sun, which they regard as feminine, smears the face of her brother, the moon, with soot, when he presses his love upon her" (*vide* Peschel, p. 266).

⁴ *I'ide* Appendix B, item 2.

Onges

THE ANDAMAN ISLANDERS

157 Western standards taciturn or sly, and the Negro peoples, who
522 frequently manifest complete abandonment in their amusement.
157 Obscenities appear to be an unfailing source of amusement to the
522 Onges, who indulge in them at every opportunity, even with
831 strangers, and the obscene dances of the womenfolk are a continual
source of pleasure. The exchange of obscenities is, indeed, a sign
of friendship, and I found that vulgarity was invariably immensely
successful in provoking hilarity; any subsequent negotiations were
always peaceable and satisfactory.

302 An extension of this vulgarity is an infantile vanity, not without
157 sexual significance. The care with which their bodies are painted
nearly every day is one aspect of this vanity; the more a wife loves
her husband the more magnificent the designs she executes on him.

153 The paintings on their bodies reach a peak every two or three days,
151 as the Onges fear illness and death if they are not newly daubed, and
151 the face at least must be continually painted, with at least smears on
the chest, arms and legs. A man returning from an exceptionally
successful hunting trip is met by his wife with a specially unusual
and elaborate design, which she carries out with great devotion.

123 During each of my visits to the island the Onges would rush up to
show me their embellishments as soon as they were finished, and
took a delight in standing in front of my camera, even though they
had no idea what it was for.

304 It is curious that unlike most primitive peoples, the Onges do
171 not practise tattooing, which is one of the simplest ways, if not *the*
simplest, in which such peoples satisfy their craving for physical
184 admiration. The other Andamanese do, puncturing the skin with
302 tiny slivers of obsidian or quartz, but the Onges paint with ochre
324 instead. They love, too, to weave garlands of fruit, flowers and
leaves from the forest, returning to the camp laden with them, men
184 and women alike, delighted with their own beauty. This divergence
of customs in peoples essentially of the same stock, but separated for
long periods of time into endogamous isolates, is very remarkable.

838 An intense preoccupation with sexual attraction and activity has
led to the prevalence of aberration. All the Onges have homosexual
tendencies. I became aware of this during my first visit to Little
Andaman on one of my longer expeditions, when I had taken only
men with me, and on subsequent occasions I therefore allowed the
men to bring their wives. The effect of long periods of absence on

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177 To truly primitive peoples like the Onges, European medical practices are fascinating. Men and women will refuse literally nothing once they are convinced of our intention to do them good and cure their ills. Although they have a rudimentary form of medicine, they recognize the superiority of European methods, and medical aid has therefore become our most powerful means of making contact with uncivilized peoples.

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197 While I was busy trying to alleviate their ailments I became aware of the power which 'medicine' has over them, and I was also able to observe their own methods of dealing with their ills. Understandably, disease, death and birth are all attributed to particular supernatural beings, or to the spirits of the dead. They try not to offend these beings, but strive nevertheless, in their own way, at least to cure disease. Once primitive peoples see our methods they respect them, and are eager to be treated; strange though it all seems, they develop a blind faith in the omnipotence of the new ways.

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164 There is little actual disease among the Onges and they have equally few vices. They are still unaware of the existence of alcohol, and have not learned how to ferment sugar substances, such as the honey in which the Little Andaman abounds. Tobacco is a recent introduction, and the Onges at once became wildly addicted to it; the tobacco leaves I had taken with me were in fact my best means of making my way peacefully into the island. A few Onges have acquired a supply of opium from Burmese and Chinese smugglers along the north coast, but instead of smoking it they seem to limit themselves to chewing it mixed with tobacco, and have fortunately no means of replenishing their stock.

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731 Polio, tuberculosis, smallpox and cancer seem unknown, but for some unknown reason the islands have on a number of occasions been struck by disastrous epidemics of measles. These epidemics struck nearly every member of some of the communal huts, judging from survivors' reports, and the sites were afterwards abandoned, leaving the huts to be destroyed by termites.

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164 The census of 1931 includes a personal observation by Portman of congenital syphilis in several Onges. This has since been proved wrong and in 1932 I found only one young man with nasal malformation possibly attributable to the disease, half-moon incisors, and abnormality of the skull and palate. I was not able to find him